

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 1704

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TAGS: EGEN, PFOR, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: WHAT HAPPENS IF BRITAIN LEAVES THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

REF: A. LONDON 4010

B. THE HAGUE 1510

SUMMARY WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY LONDON THAT BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM THE
EC COULD BE DAMAGING TO NATO, AND THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF
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WITHDRAWAL MAY FURTHER WEAKEN BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO ALLIANCE
DEFENCE. IN ADDITION, THE RESENTMENTS GENERATED BY BRITAIN'S
DEPARTURE FROM THE EC WOULD HAVE AN UNFAVORABLE EFFECT ON INTER-
ALLIANCE RELATIONS. THE BRITISH WOULD PROBABLY

ATTACH INCREASED IMPORTANCE TO NATO AS AN INSTITUTION FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL FROM EC, AND MIGHT SEEK A "JUNIOR PARTNER" RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. UK WITHDRAWAL MIGHT FURTHER WEAKEN EUROPEAN CONFIDENCE AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC DESLOCATION, CHALLENGE ACROSS THE SOUTHERN FLANK, AND GROWING MILITARY STRENGTH. END SUMMARY.

1. MISSION READD WITH INTEREST LONDON'S LUCID ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES IF THE UK DECIDES TO WITHDRAW FROM THE EC. WE AGREE THAT BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EC COULD BE DAMAGING TO NATO, WITH THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE DEPENDENT ON THE CONDITIONS THAT ACCOMPANIED WITHDRAWAL. THE NATURE OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE UK AND THE REMAINING EIGHT WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN THIS REGARD. WHETHER BRITAIN THEN CHOSE TO INSULAR, OR AN OUTWARD-LOOKING POLICY WOULD BE TOO. AND, PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT, BRITAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO AND INFLUENCE IN THE ALLIANCE WOULD BE DEEPLY AFFECTED BY HER FUTURE ECONOMIC HEALTH. LONG-RUN SEVERE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF WITHDRAWAL ON THE UK MIGHT RESULT IN DEFENSE CUTS EVEN DEEPER THAN THOSE PLANNED AS A RESULT OF THE DEFENSE REVIEW, THUS FURTHER WEAKENING BRITISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALLIANCE DEFENSE.

2. IN ADDITION, THE RESENTMENTS GENERATED BY BRITAIN'S DEPARTURE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE THEIR EFFECT ON INTER-ALLIANCE RELATIONS. THE PROCESS OF UK DISENGAGEMENT FROM THE EC WOULD, WHILE IT LASTED, DISTRACT THE EUROPEAN ALLIED MEMBERS OF THE EC FROM THE NEED FOR MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ENDEAVORS IN NATO. UK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EC WOULD, HOWEVER, PROBABLY INCREASE THE IMPORTANCE THE UK ATTACHES TO NATO AS AN INSTITUTION. UK DCM LOGAN (WHO THINKS UK WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE A DISASTER) MADE THIS POINT RECENTLY TO A MISSION OFFICER. LOGAN OBSERVED THAT NATO AND OECD WOULD THEN BE THE PRINCIPAL ORGANIZATION LINKING THE UK WITH THE EUROPEANS, AND THE UK WOULD PROBABLY WISH TO USE NATO FOR A BROADER RANGE OF CONSULTATIONS THAN IT DOES NOW.

3. EVEN UNDER OPTIMISTIC ASSUMPTIONS, THE UK'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN NATO WOULD, HOWEVER, DIMINISH FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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THE EC. THE UK, WHICH UNDER HEATH TENDED TO PLAY SECOND FIDDLE TO THE FRENCH IN NATO AFFAIRS, HAS TRIED DURING WILSON'S TENURE TO PLAY AN HONEST BROKER ROLE BETWEEN THE OTHER EC EIGHT AND THE U.S. SUCH A NATO ROLE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BECOME IMPOSSIBLE IN THE EVENT OF WITHDRAWAL, AND THE UK MIGHT THEN ATTEMPT TO GRAVITATE TOWARD THE U.S. AND PERHAPS SEEK TO CREATE A "JUNIOR PARTNER" RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. IN NATO. THE LATTER SORT OF UK ROLE WOULD BE DISTINCTLY LESS USEFUL TO THE U.S. THAN THE UK ROLE WITHIN THE EC AS HONEST BROKER.

4. IN CUTTING ITSELF OFF FROM ITS EC PARTNERS, THE UK WOULD PROBABLY ALSO EXERCISE LESS INFLUENCE THAN AT PRESENT IN NATO DEFENSE DELIBERATIONS. THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE HERE WOULD BE BRITAIN'S

TROOP PRESENCE ON THE CONTINENT. IF THIS PRESENCE IS MAINTAINED, AT PRESENT STRENGTH, THE UK'S VOICE IN ALLIANCE DEFENSE POLICY WILL CONTINUE TO BE A SIGNIFICANT ONE; REDUCTION OR DEPARTURE OF THE TROOPS WOULD DRASTICALLY DIMINISH UK INFLUENCE.

5. WE AGREE WITH LONDON THAT WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EC WOULD TEND TO SLOW DOWN THE EUROGROUP'S MODEST PROGRESS TOWARDS MORE CONCRETE EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. EFFORTS TO STANDARDIZE THE COPRODUCED MILITARY EQUIPMENT WOULD PROBABLY ALSO BE SET BACK.

6. FINALLY, MISSON BELIEVES UK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EC MIGHT HAVE AN ADDITIONAL IMPACT ON THE ALLIANCE THROUGH THE EFFECT IT WOULD HAVE ON EUROPEAN CONFIDENCE, COMING AS IT WOULD AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC DISLOCATION THROUGHOUT EUROPE, OF CHALLENGE ACROSS EUROPE'S ENTIRE SOUTHERN FLANK, AND OF GROWING SOVIET MILITARY STRENGTH.
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